

GRANT!

Official Despatches from Secretary Stanton to Gen. Dix.

OUR CONTINUED SUCCESS.

The Rebels Driven to Their Breastworks.

The First Line of Rebel Rifle Pits Carried by General Wright's Corps.

General Assault on the Enemy's Works.

Terrific Bombardment with Siege Guns.

ANOTHER VICTORY FOR OUR TROOPS.

AID FOR THE WOUNDED.

The Doubt About General Wadsworth's Body.

Our Headquarters Two Miles in Advance of Spottsylvania Court House.

So. So. So.

Secretary Stanton to Major General Dix.

Washington, May 11, 1864.

Major General Dix:

Despatches from the Army of the Potomac have just reached here, bearing dates to five o'clock P. M. yesterday.

Both armies at that time held their positions at Spottsylvania Court House, without any material change.

The enemy had been driven to their breastworks.

The Sixth corps, under General Wright, had carried the first line of the enemy's rifle pits.

There had been heavy skirmishing during the day.

Our wounded had reached Fredericksburg, and during the night some were brought up to Washington.

The Surgeon General reports that ample supplies of nurses, surgeons and medical stores have gone forward.

There has been nothing but General Sherman or General Butler since my last despatch of yesterday.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

Secretary Stanton to General Dix.

Washington, May 11, 1864.

To Major General Dix:

No intelligence has been received by this Department from the Army of the Potomac since my despatch of this morning.

A despatch from General Sherman, dated at Tunnel Hill, 7:30 P. M., May 10, states that McPherson had not attacked the enemy at Ream's, having found their position strongly fortified, and had taken his position at Snake Creek Gap.

General Sherman was in front of Buzzard Roost Gap, awaiting the arrival of a part of his forces.

This despatch came by way of Knoxville and Cumberland Gap, having been delayed over twenty-four hours in consequence of a heavy storm that broke down all the lines south of Nashville.

No intelligence has been received to-day from Gen. Butler's command, except that 300 rebel prisoners, including one negro, had arrived at Fort Monroe, from City Point, in charge of a negro guard.

From Banks' command nothing of recent date has been received.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

INCIDENTS OF THE BATTLE FIELD.

Mr. Francis C. Long's Despatches.

In the Field, Near Spottsylvania Court House, May 8—Evening.

THE ADVANCE AFTER THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS.

As four o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, May 7, the army, which had been fighting almost continuously for two days, with somewhat equal success, began to move towards Chancellorsville. The two days' fighting in the Wilderness was very disastrous to both parties, as the losses sustained by either army were about equal.

THE BATTLE BEGAN TO WIND UP.

The place General Lee chose for a battle ground was a very poor one in some respects, as he could not bring his artillery to bear upon us. On the Orange pike, running through our line perpendicularly, the enemy had a battery planted, and threw a few shells down the road occasionally, without, however, doing much damage.

THE BATTLE BEGAN TO WIND UP.

Lee must have been easily puzzled to ascertain the exact position of our line; for the few shots and shells thrown from his batteries were fired at random, doing little damage to anything save the tops of the trees, and, although I passed the whole length of our line of battle several times, it was so irregular and hidden in such impenetrable thickets of shrubs and trees I could scarcely form an opinion of its length, strength, or the exact position it occupied.

THE WILDERNESS BATTLE—HOW IT BEGAN.

General Meade, it is understood, did not wish to bring on an engagement with the rebels in the Wilderness. Had the enemy remained in his intrenchments at Raccoon or Morison's ford, it is probable that we should have passed them without firing a single shot.

THE HOSPITALS.

The hospitals of the several divisions at the battle of

The Wilderness presented a fearful picture of suffering. Long trains of ambulances were continually bringing in men wounded in every place and in every way the imagination can conceive. The few minutes I spent at one of the field hospitals has left a picture of horror on my mind that will not soon be obliterated. Some lay pale and quiet, seeming almost dead; others were frantically disfigured by wounds in the face, and the blood oozing from their wounds formed pools upon the ground. Others, groaning, praying, sighing and shrieking ascended together. The tired and overworked surgeons were constantly at work, probing wounds, dressing contusions and performing amputations, while outside the line where they worked lay piles of arms, legs, hands and feet. To add to the discomfort of our wounded, the weather was unusually warm, and many of the poor fellows had but little protection from the rays of the sun. They lay groaning with the anguish of their wounds, and half suffocated with heat. The surgeons at the different hospitals and upon the battle field did all that was in their power to mitigate the sufferings of the men.

THE LATER ADVANCEMENT OF THE WILDERNESS. When the army advanced from the Wilderness our sick and wounded had to be loaded in the ambulances and baggage wagons and taken along with us. It is a work of considerable importance to transport from twelve to fifteen thousand wounded men under such circumstances as attended the present march. As many as could be transported were loaded in the wagons and taken along. One thousand at least—some say more—were left behind, unable to be removed. Large numbers of our wounded men left the hospitals on foot as soon as they heard they were to be left behind, preferring to limp and crawl after the army; and all day yesterday disabled soldiers were dragging themselves along after our wagon trains—some substituting a pair of muskets for crutches, while others might be seen too weak to support themselves, but each assisted along between two comrades, both of whom were nearly as badly off as himself.

APPROACHING SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE—THE REBELS IN LINE. About four miles from Spottsylvania Court House we encountered a considerable force of rebels, who were drawn up in line of battle to oppose our further advance. Our cavalry had been amusing them all the day previous with brisk skirmishes, and shelling them with a few pieces of light artillery.

A line of battle was immediately formed by our troops in the form of a right angle or letter L. General Hancock, with the First, Third and Fourth divisions of his (the Second) corps, commanding one angle, and General Warren and Sedgwick the other. General Sedgwick commanded a part of his corps (the Sixth) and one division of the Second, and General Warren commanded a portion of the Fifth corps.

THE STRUGGLE—REBEL RESISTANCE AND OUR VICTORY. The enemy resisted every foot of the ground desperately; but they were driven backward gradually, and when the fighting ceased for the night we had wrested two or three miles of ground from them, and we are at present in peaceful occupation of it.

Two thousand prisoners, it is reported, were captured yesterday from Longstreet, who is said to be in front of us.

MONDAY, May 9, 1864.

To-day a new line of communication will be opened with Washington by the way of Aquia Creek, via Fredericksburg. The rebel prisoners will be sent to Washington, as well as our wounded.

THE SITUATION.

The rebellion was on its last legs we have often been assured; but never till now has it been so apparent. Jeff. Davis knows well that he must crush the Army of the Potomac in the present struggle, or his confederacy will be irretrievably crushed. He is making almost superhuman efforts to check the slow but sure advance of the Union army.

VICTOR OF THE CAMPAIGN.

It is acknowledged by every one that the vigor with which the present campaign is conducted far exceeds any former one since the war was inaugurated. Things are progressing a hundredfold, and, although we may meet with heavy losses, and perhaps a partial defeat, yet if the armor which characterizes the beginning of the pending struggle be continued victory will inevitably perch upon our banners—a glorious victory, sacred for the cause for which it was won, and still more sacred for having passed through the solemn ritual of baptism in the hallowed blood of our sons and brothers.

WHY WE HAVE NOT MOVED FASTER.

The movements of the army since the battle of the Wilderness have been much impeded by the vast numbers of the wounded who were obliged to take with us, and if they are not sent to Washington, via Aquia Creek, as it is reported they will be, some way of getting rid of such a serious encumbrance must be devised very soon; for the number of our disabled is increasing daily.

OUR ARMY CORRESPONDENCE.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

THE FIRST ADVANCE.

The Army of the Potomac started on Wednesday, the 4th inst., crossing the Rapidan in the following order:—The Fifth corps, preceded by a division of cavalry and followed by the Sixth corps, crossed at Germania Ford, and moved along the plank road towards Chancellorsville. The Second corps, also preceded by a cavalry division, crossed at Rye's Ford, moving parallel with the other commands and towards the same point.

All the supply trains accompanied the Second corps. The ammunition train and a few wagons, loaded with forage, moved on the plank road, forming a double column with the Fifth and Sixth corps.

Burnside's command remained near Brandy Station, and followed after the Sixth corps on Thursday. The other cavalry division was stationed at Germania Ford for the protection of our rear.

THE ONSET OF THE MOVEMENT.

was to reach Spottsylvania Court House, if possible, without an engagement, and where the topography of the country affords much better facilities for either offensive or defensive operations. Information received from prisoners on the evenings of Thursday and Friday clearly demonstrated that Lee expected to entrap us at the Wilderness, and for this purpose offered no opposition to our advance across the Rapidan.

ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON OUR CAVALRY ON THE RIGHT FLANK OF THE FIFTH CORPS MET THE REBEL CAVALRY, ADVANCING DOWN THE TURNPIKE LEADING FROM ORANGE COURT HOUSE TO WILDERNESS, and after a sharp skirmish were pressed back; the impression prevailed among our officers that this was but a feint of the enemy, and Wadsworth's division was sent out across the fields, with orders to attack the advancing rebel column on the flank; but, the skirmishers having been thrown out to a considerable distance in advance of the division, before our troops could accomplish their object the enemy were apprised of our movement and deployed along a wooded crest, in one place, and poured into the division a murderous fire. Our men were in a morose field, and wholly exposed, while the enemy's position advantageously secured him from view. After a desperate struggle the division broke and fell back in some disorder, which, however, was speedily checked.

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE REBELS—AN ENGAGEMENT.

It was then found that Ewell's whole corps was before us at this point, and that Ewell, followed by Longstreet, was advancing on the plank road from Orange Court House to Chancellorsville, and in line parallel to that followed by Ewell and within supporting distance. Griffin's division engaged the enemy on Wadsworth's right shortly after the attack of the latter, and for about two hours the battle raged quite fiercely, each side advancing and being repulsed alternately. Night closed this struggle, the enemy having suffered very terribly and failed in his attempt to pierce our column. Our forces, however, which had been engaged, having fought at a considerable distance from the main column, in being forced back had left a large number of wounded on the field.

ADVANCE OF THE SECOND CORPS—BURNISIDE'S ARRIVAL—CAVALRY OPERATIONS.

In the meantime the Second corps had passed Chancellorsville and pushed on towards Spottsylvania Court House, while the wagon trains were all collected at the former place. Burnside came in to the support of the Fifth and Sixth corps, which slowly moved on as originally intended, but prepared for another attack. At day-light on Friday our cavalry began engaged with the enemy and was rapidly pushed back past the junction of the Germania Ford and Orange Court House plank roads, which point had not yet been reached by our infantry.

WARREN'S PROMPTITUDE—HILL AND LONGSTREET REBURNED.

Just at this critical moment, however, the Fifth corps

came up, checked Hill's advance, and enabled our troops to get into line of battle in front and on the left of the rebels, while Hancock, who had reached Todd's tavern, near Spottsylvania Court House, wheeled to the right, and, marching towards the rear of our guns, came up on the left of the Fifth corps, thereby forming a perfect and unbroken line, through which Hill and Longstreet desperately but vainly attempted to break.

THE REBELS ORDERED TO THE REAR—THE REBELS IN A TIGHT PLACE.

Our wagon trains were then ordered back from Chancellorsville to the rear of the Sixth corps, and a portion of Burnside's corps was moved around, with one division of the Sixth, to the left of the Fifth corps, which rested on the Orange Court House plank road. Wadsworth's division, with its right advanced, pushed through the woods from Wilderness tavern to the scene, and, with Getty's division, formed a hook on the right of the Second corps, thereby almost surrounding the advance of Hill's column, which, however, in the dense forest, managed to escape after suffering severely.

WADSWORTH'S MOVEMENT—HIS DEATH.

Wadsworth moved on after the retreating rebels, who fought with terrible desperation, until he had reached a point three or four miles in advance of our line, when a battery opened upon him, enfilading his column and slaughtering our men fearfully. At this point the General was killed.

GENERAL WADSWORTH'S SUCCESSORS.

General Cutler took command of the division; but, a large force of Ewell's corps having moved across to the support of Hill, our advance was driven back.

This engagement lasted from daylight until about eleven o'clock A. M., the enemy advancing upon our main body only to be driven back in disorder, while our troops set in pursuit would follow to the rebel reserve to be repulsed in turn.

HOW THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT.

Both armies had protected their main columns by falling trees and forming almost impassable abatis, and the fighting was done principally by divisions sent out from these lines. The movements during the entire battle were of a remarkable character, being expressly described as a series of the rebels making frantic efforts to pierce our lines, first at one point and then another, to be driven back by our troops, who charged impetuously up to the rebel barricades. It is impossible now to particularize the individual achievements of divisions, as these were frequently taken from one corps to support another, and at times one corps commander would have under his direction nearly one-half the army. Occasionally there was considerable disorder, but nothing serious, as troops that broke and ran in the wildest manner afterwards made some of the most brilliant charges of the day.

After failing to crush our left and centre, the enemy made a sudden attack upon our right, and for a short time threatened to turn our flank. The right was slowly pressed back, and it was feared that a change of front would become necessary; but the rebels were finally checked, and abandoned all they had gained as rapidly as they had acquired it. After eleven o'clock there was very little fighting, and the day was occupied in feeling the enemy's position and looking after the wounded.

THE FIGHTING ON SATURDAY—LEE'S MOVEMENTS.

On Saturday there was a little fighting, but nothing of consequence. Lee having moved off to Spottsylvania Court House, leaving behind his barricades a strong force, which at night followed on as the rear guard.

THE ENEMY AGAIN ATTACKED.

Saturday night our forces moved down towards Spottsylvania Court House, and on Sunday attacked the enemy again. The fighting, however, was not decisive, only a small portion of the troops being engaged.

OPERATIONS OF MONDAY AND TUESDAY.

Sunday and Monday were occupied in securing positions, a little fighting going on at intervals.

THE WORK OF TUESDAY—OUR POSITION.

Yesterday it was expected that a grand attack would be made upon the enemy. Lee occupied a position south of Spottsylvania Court House, his advance holding the place. Our lines confronted him on the north and west, with the Fifth corps in the centre, the Second on the left, and the Sixth on the right, Burnside's troops in reserve. None of the negro troops had been engaged, but they were expected to go in next. The cavalry had been sent round Lee's army, and information had been received to the effect that he had destroyed his communication with Richmond by rail, and captured a large number of prisoners.

General Meade had exclusive control of the troops, and in carrying out General Grant's plans has handled the army with consummate skill, notwithstanding the shifting of divisions and the temporary disorder which occurred from time to time. The army is in fine condition, in complete order, and confident of success. Our wagon trains are all safe in the rear of the troops, with plenty of supplies, and, except in the loss of men, the army is as formidable as ever.

IT IS YET IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE OUR LOSSES. Our loss of general officers is particularly severe, and includes the following:—Sedgwick, Wadsworth, Hays and Webb, killed; Getty, Robinson, Baxter and Owens, wounded; and Shaler, Seymour and Neil, prisoners. The loss of the rebels is believed to be equally severe, though as they removed nearly all their wounded to Gordonsville, it is impossible to determine the number. Most of their dead were left unburied. Our own wounded are being well cared for in Fredericksburg, and are being forwarded to Washington as rapidly as circumstances will permit. A post-mortem bridge has been laid across the Rapidan, and the line is uninterrupted. The unusual number of slight wounds is attributed to the character of the country in which our men fought, many of the missiles that would otherwise have proved fatal, striking the trees and glancing, inflicting slight injury.

A CHANCE FOR OUR ARTILLERY.

Very little of the artillery has been engaged up to yesterday, but the openness of country now occupied by our forces will enable us to bring into action that formidable arm of our service.

The campaign thus far, while it has not proved as decisive as was anticipated, is encouraging, and promises to be highly successful. The indomitable will of our army is not and cannot be broken, nor has its confidence been impaired in any degree. We started forthrightly expecting to get into position there without a fight. In this we failed, although Lee also failed in his attempt to crush us by falling upon our flank. After a desperate battle he has been compelled to abandon his scheme and take up another plan. He now occupies the position we were seeking to secure, and it remains for us to fight the battle for which we originally set out.

There is no doubt of the fact that Lee has received reinforcements since the fighting commenced.

There are rumors that Lee is retreating towards Hanover Junction, but of this there is nothing confirmatory.

THE WASHINGTON TELEGRAMS.

THE FIRST DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

Despatches from the Army of the Potomac, issued by General Wright, who succeeds the late General Sedgwick, as an able soldier, and who will not fail to secure the confidence of those over whom he is placed.

No movement of the army was intended to be made on Monday; but a brief report of rest would be given to the soldiers after their heavy labors during the past week.

All was very quiet along the lines until late in the afternoon on Monday.

It was thought that the rebels were probably falling back, or that General Lee had already gone to Richmond to meet General Smith, who was reported as being close to that place, and therefore a move was determined as on our part, and our forces commenced moving at half past five o'clock on Monday evening.

THE SECOND DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11—E. M.

Nothing has been received here of any reverse to General Grant's army.

The impression prevailed in the army yesterday that General Lee was about to cross the North Anna river.

The entire line moved forward, the right consisting of General Birney's and General Gibbon's divisions of the Second corps, and General Carroll's brigade on the left, joining General Warren, the latter being in the centre, with the Sixth corps forming the left.

The right crossed a branch of the river Po and charged on a light horse battery, which was posted to cover a small bridge, but which quickly limbered up and started off, the skirmishers supporting it also retreating.

In the front of Warren and on the left of Hancock quite a lively engagement ensued, the shell and round shot

from one of the enemy's batteries placed in the woods coming in rather close proximity to some lookers on in an open field in the rear of General Warren's headquarters, and causing a stampede of the crowd there.

The enemy were driven back about three-fourths of a mile, and at dark the firing ceased.

A few prisoners were captured during this skirmish. They belonged to Wilcox's division, of General A. P. Hill's corps.

It is believed, however, that General Longstreet's corps was the only one on front, and that he was left there to impede our progress as much as possible while General Lee was attending to General Smith.

A rebel cavalry brigade is reported as having been seen on the north side of the river Rapidan on Monday, near Fredericksburg.

As Fredericksburg is in our possession the trains of the wounded have been sent thither to be forwarded to Belle Plain, and thence by transports to Washington.

Members were sent forward to stop all the boats going up the Potomac river, that they might load up the wounded.

THE THIRD DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

Gen. Robinson suffers much from his wound, which is in the knee.

His division was in the advance on the Spottsylvania road, from Todd's Tavern, with Gen. Phil. Sheridan's cavalry, and had driven the rebels about six miles, carrying two positions they had endeavored to hold.

On reaching a cross road the rebels made a determined stand behind a temporary breastwork of rails and ties, and were massed in strong force, the greater part of their position being hidden from view by dense woods.

An attempt was made to carry this position; but it failed; when General Robinson rode up in front of his men and said "The place must be ours," and asked the men to follow him.

The men replied with loud and enthusiastic cheers, and, forming in line, rushed to the attack in the most gallant style.

A terrific fire of musketry from the rebels met them in the face, and General Robinson being wounded and scarcely able to keep his seat in the saddle, the column was forced to fall back.

The whole affair cost us about three hundred men, and the loss of the services of one of the ablest and bravest generals in the army.

The Pennsylvania Reserves were afterwards led against the same position; but they met the same fate as General Robinson's force, and the attempt was abandoned for the night.

Colonel Locke, Assistant Adjutant General to General Warren, was seriously wounded in the face on Sunday, while riding along the line delivering orders.

One of the most repulsive spectacles presented in the late campaign was that of some bodies found partially consumed by fire, the unfortunate men having been burned to death.

These fires were started by men who had been cooking, or through some heedless carelessness, and the leaves and husks lying around being very dry, the flames spread with great rapidity, extending over acres.

Of course the wounded left on the ground suffered the additional torture of death by fire. A number of our wounded were on Monday still on the Wilderness battle field.

On Monday night, about eleven o'clock, the rebels in front of General Warren's corps made an assault on a line of the pits heavily constructed.

Our men gave them a volley and fell back for the purpose of drawing them out to a second line. The ruse was successful, and as the rebels advanced they were received by a destructive fire, which drove them back in disorder, but, finding our men still retreating, they followed them up and charged on our third line.

There the whole line gave them such a raking fire as almost to demolish them, and, springing after them, charged and drove them back in disorder.

Their loss was very heavy, while ours was light. We took a number of prisoners.

On Sunday General Burnside began the attack with great fury and an encouraging degree of success.

THE FOURTH DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

It is reported that last night our headquarters were two miles in advance of Spottsylvania Court House.

A general advance was ordered for five o'clock yesterday (Tuesday) evening, and the firing from that hour to sundown is said to have been very heavy.

It is stated that Grant has captured a large amount of rebel commissary stores.

THE FIFTH DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

A rumor has been put in circulation that Grant's army is falling back upon Fredericksburg. It is without foundation. It is based only on the fact that Grant has detailed a strong guard to protect the line from Fredericksburg to his present position at Spottsylvania Court House, to protect from rebel cavalry raids the wounded being brought to the rear and supplies being forwarded to the front.

It is true that the fighting since Thursday last has been almost continuous, and the most terrible ever known in the annals of war. The losses are unprecedented; but both sides have lost equally, and the universal testimony of wounded officers returned is that our soldiers have stood up to the fight as courageously as the rebels, with all their maddened desperation.

One fact is patent: Grant has steadily gained ground. His unwounded men are as fresh and as full of spirit as at the beginning, his supplies are uninterrupted, and his co-operating columns have accomplished all that was expected.

Intelligent officers who left the front yesterday state that the position of our army entirely commands Spottsylvania Court House.

A furious assault was made upon our lines yesterday morning, and was repulsed, the lines remaining unbroken. Preparations were then being made for the final attack upon Lee, with unlimited confidence in its complete success.

It is known that Lee's supplies of every description are limited, and his opportunity for reinforcements completely cut off.

THE SIXTH DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

Drs. Gordon Buck, Hamilton H. Smith, Finckel, Sands and DeWitt, of New York City, and delegations of surgeons from Boston, Philadelphia and other cities, have gone to Fredericksburg to take care of our wounded and relieve the army surgeons, so that they can attend to their duties in the field.

The remains of Gen. Sedgwick arrived here this morning, attended by Col. Leroy Stone and Major Gettler, of his staff. They are to be embalmed, and will be forwarded to New York this evening by the 7:30 train.

Gen. A. W. Markley, Director of the Gunpowder and Ammunition, has provided for this purpose a special car.

Gen. Robinson, wounded in the battle of Sunday morning at Spottsylvania Court House, reached here this morning. He is cared for at the residence of his brother, Capt. Robinson. The wound is a severe one in the left knee. It is thought amputation will be necessary.

The remains of General Wadsworth have arrived, and are in charge of members of his family here.

Hospital transports loaded with wounded are arriving. About two thousand have already come up.

Brigadier General Abernethy has been assigned to the command of the troops in and about Fredericksburg, which has been made a depot for supplies and wounded men.

Intendant Colonel R. H. Latrop has been relieved from the Hospital Examining Board, and as assistant inspector general of this department, and assigned to the Department of the North as Inspector General, headquarters at Cumberland, Ohio.

Notwithstanding the military movements on James river, the exchange of prisoners is still going on. The exchange is now made at Aiken's Landing, ten miles below Richmond.

THE SEVENTH DESPATCH.

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1864.

Colonel LeRoy Stone, commanding a brigade in Wadsworth's division, has arrived here, having been injured by a fall from his horse while leading a rebel battery.

The Colonel's brigade was in ten separate engagements with the enemy, and his suffered heavily. His old wounds have proved quite troublesome, and as seen as his health will allow it is understood that he will be placed on one of the corps martial in session here.

General Warren is not killed, as currently reported, the rumor probably arising from the death of Colonel Warren of the Eleventh Virginia (Union) regiment.

General W. H. Morris, reported wounded, is the son of General G. P. Morris,